



All Things... Lent and Easter

ideas to use with children and young people

From The Go Team



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

All things Lent and Easter

Introduction

This booklet provides you with a range of ideas to use during Lent and Easter. The Go Team have collated some of their favourite ideas for exploring this central and significant season. You will find ideas for various age groups that you can adapt as necessary for your context. As we seek to live and tell the story of Jesus, we hope and pray that these ideas will help you and provide you with some inspiration for your toddlers, children, youth and families. Many of these ideas have been trialled and tested by ourselves and others. Most ideas have an online link for you to follow for further explanation.

For further help and support do contact one of the Go Team Advisers. We would love to hear your stories and experiences of using this resource. Please share them with us through sending us an email or sharing your photos with us on Twitter (@GoTeamAdvisers) and Instagram (goteamadvisers).

Sign up to our newsletter **Inform** at

www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/youth-children

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Top 10 Ideas for under 5s...

1. Easter story sensory box/tray

Fill a tray with sand – the bigger the tray, the better.

Collect items that link to the Easter story for example: Donkey, Coconut halves (to represent sound of donkey hooves on the road), leaves (to represent palm leaves) Nails (plastic or large and blunt), plastic hammer/mallet, bandages, various sized crosses – holding crosses etc. (nothing that is so small it can be swallowed), plastic bread and plastic wine glasses, crown, dice, cockerel toy, round stones, plastic or wooden people, feet shapes, heart shapes



2. Easter story snack mix:

This provides a way of making Easter Eggs more meaningful. This could be used in various ways. Fill the plastic eggs with the assortment of snacks, produce a label with the meanings and give as gifts. Alternatively, you could talk through each item and get children to fill their own eggs. Filled eggs could be used as part of an Easter Egg Hunt, the possibilities are endless! As ever when doing any activity involving food, beware of allergies.



<https://happyhomefairy.com/easter-story-snack-mix-free-printable/>



3. Easter doughnut tombs:

This will no doubt prove to be a popular activity with all ages! Use doughnuts and Oreo's to produce tombs! You could use a Ryvita or similar flat biscuit as a base. Grass could be made using green icing or colour some dried coconut and stick to base using icing. Throughout the activity, take the opportunity to talk about the empty tomb.

Adapt from the following instructions:

<http://living31.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/empty-tomb-easter-treat.html>

4. Bead and clay crosses

Using coloured air dry clay, make cross shapes. Push coloured beads into the dough, to create an exciting and attractive Easter keepsake. You may like to try and engage children in conversation about the cross as they are making it. Remind them that they are making their cross bright and colourful because Jesus didn't stay on the cross and that Easter Sunday reminds us of the excitement of Jesus coming back to life again.



5. Easter story stones

This provides a creative way of helping young children to begin to piece together holy week. Using pebbles or stones, put simple designs on each, as indicated in the photos. Print off the printable sheets with the simple explanation of each stone and encourage the children to match the stones to the photos. Furthermore, using an age appropriate children's Bible such as 'The Jesus Storybook Bible' or the Bob Hartman's The Lion Storyteller Bible, share the Easter story with the children, getting them to find the stone that fits to each part. The children can play with the stones, trying to order them correctly as a way of delving into the Easter Story.

<https://faithfullittlehands.com/easter-story-stones/>



6. Easter story in an box or bag

Often it is challenging to get this age group to sit still for long enough to tell a story. Story bags and boxes help to keep the children's attention, but also allow them the freedom to explore the story at their own pace and at their own level of understanding. Story bags keep them intrigued and allow their imaginations to work. Some examples of what to put in a story box can be found on the God Venture website, whilst the photo below offers some further ideas on an Easter Story bag.

<http://godventure.co.uk/news/holy-week-boxes/>

7. Chalk board cross

This activity provides an opportunity to pray with young children. Make a wooden cross, ensuring that the wood is well sanded and does not have splinters on it. Paint the cross with chalkboard paint (available from places such as Amazon, EBay, B&Q and Wilko). For the activity, have a range of different coloured chalks available. Get the children to sit around the cross, encourage them to talk about what the cross looks like and how the colour black makes them feel. Describe black as being a sad colour, and relate it to the sad part of the Easter story, when Jesus died. Then talk about how the story turns from darkness, to excitement, when Jesus comes back to life. Ask the children to think of things that they would like to say thank you to God for. Ask them to make the cross bright and colourful, by drawing pictures of their 'Thank you' prayers. You may need to ask them to share and not take up too much space, to make sure all their friends have a space to draw their picture.

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/search?q=chalk+cross>



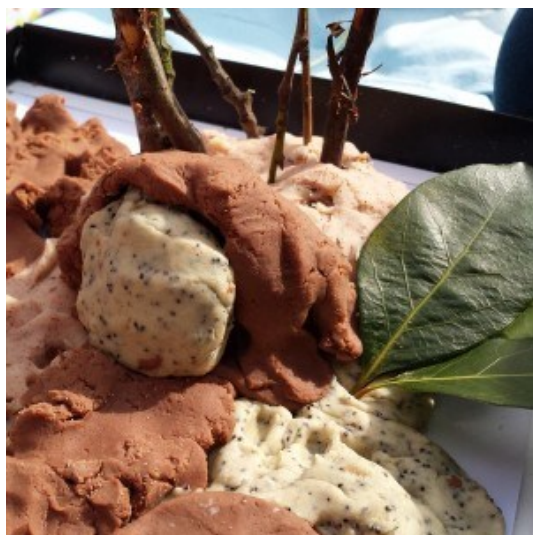
8. Easter story treasure hunt

Hide images that represent each day of Holy week, talk through what happened on each day – you may like to use a children's bible to help you.

9. Easter play-doh mats

There are a range of play-doh mats available from Flame Creative to help children engage in the Easter Story. Print and laminate the various sheets available and allow children to explore the life changing story of Easter through the imagery.

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/two-easter-play-dough-mats-in-tomb-and.html>



10. Play-doh sensory Easter gardens

Easter gardens are a long standing favourite Easter activity, but have you ever considered making one using playdoh? God Venture has some brilliant ideas on how you may like to do this. To give this activity a further dimension, why not consider adding a scent to the playdoh and some textures. This will engage the children's sense of smell and touch. Add some Play Mobil or Lego characters, plus find some foliage and allow children to create different parts of the Easter story, from the cross to the empty tomb. It's a fantastic way of getting children to engage in conversation around the Easter narrative.

<http://godventure.co.uk/news/easter-gardens/>

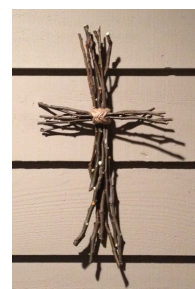


Top 10 Ideas for 5-10s...



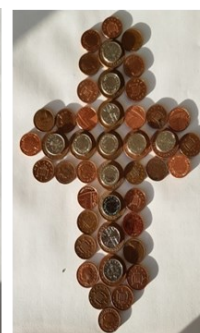
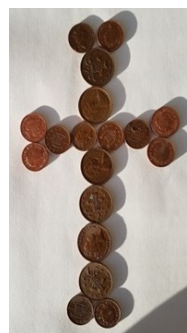
1. Twig crosses

Go for a walk in a wood as a family and collect lots of thin twigs (these can be found on the ground, instead of snapping them off trees). Take them home (dry them if they are wet) and snap or cut them into two different sizes to make the main stem of the cross and the cross section. Then bind them together in a cross shape using string or wool. These can be used as a door front decoration during lent or at Easter.



2. Coin Crosses

Collect as many coins as you can find. Then use the coins to make lots of different shapes, designs and sizes of crosses. These can be photographed to have a record of the different designs. The final cross can be joining all the coins together to make a massive cross. When you have finished this activity collect all the coins up and give them to a local charity.



3. Tissue paper crosses

You will need:

- A4 paper
- A marker pen
- PVA glue or a glue stick
- Coloured tissue paper
- Scissors



On the A4 paper draw a cross shape, then put a thin layer of glue in the cross shape. Cut up or rip up bits of the tissue paper and scrunch it up. Then stick it on the cross until it is full. When the glue is dry you can cut the cross shape out.

4. Lolly stick crosses

You will need:

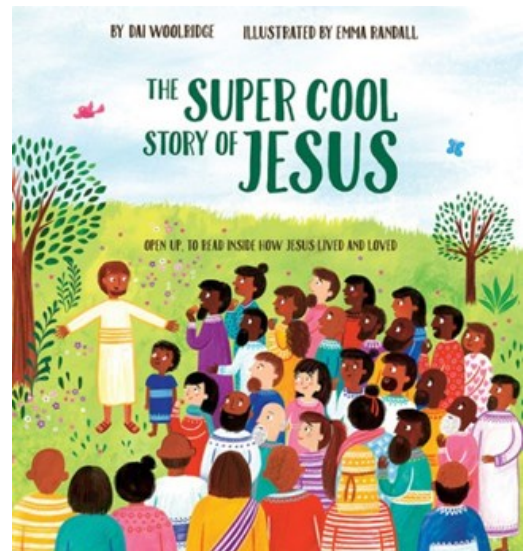
- Lolly sticks
- Glue gun
- Ribbon/ string/ twine for hanging the cross or for binding the cross together
- Glitter, markers, beads, sequins or other things to decorate the lolly sticks



Make a cross shape using the lolly stick and bind it together with glue or twine. Then fix the hanging ribbon and decorate the cross shape using the craft materials. When the cross is dry it can be hung up as a decoration.

5. Super Cool story of Jesus

Download the Bible Society's 'Super Cool story of Jesus' for children and show it to a group of children. There are a number of other resources to compliment the video that can be used with children at church or in a primary school, this can even be used by a family. You can purchase the 'Super Cool story of Jesus' booklet to give to children at 50p per copy.



<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/landing/the-super-cool-story-of-jesus-video/>

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/landing/super-cool-trail/>

https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/content/get_involved/easter/2017/resources/easter_colouring_sheets.pdf

6. Easter buns



Make a batch of Easter buns or hot cross buns, using an on-line recipe or here is a traditional hot cross bun recipe link <http://speedbumpkitchen.com/hot-cross-buns/>
Alternatively, to make the cross on the top of the buns you can use an icing gel or red liquorish bootlaces.

7. Easter egg decorating

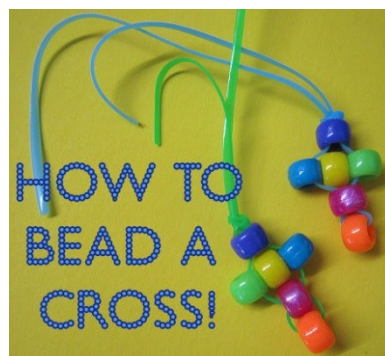
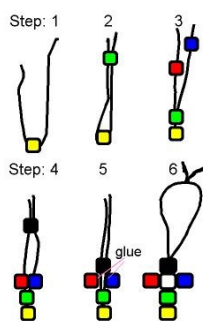


You will need:

- Some cheap Easter eggs (these can be purchased in supermarkets and pound shops)
- A bar of chocolate
- A range of sweets
- Different colour Icing gels

Melt the chocolate to use as glue and use it to stick sweets on the Easter egg, you can also use the icing gels to write words, outline shapes or add patterns. This can also be done with cream eggs.

8. Bead crosses



You will need:

- Pony Beads
- String (or plastic string)
- Glue or glue dots <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bostik-Sticky-Glue-Dots-Removable/dp/B004009XMW>

Start by laying out six beads and cutting a length of string. If you are making a necklace, you'll need a long string. Then attach three of the beads together using the glue dots, this will form the cross part. Then start stringing using the full instructions <http://www.catholicicing.com/how-to-bead-a-cross-fun-christian-craft/>

9. Junk sculpture tomb



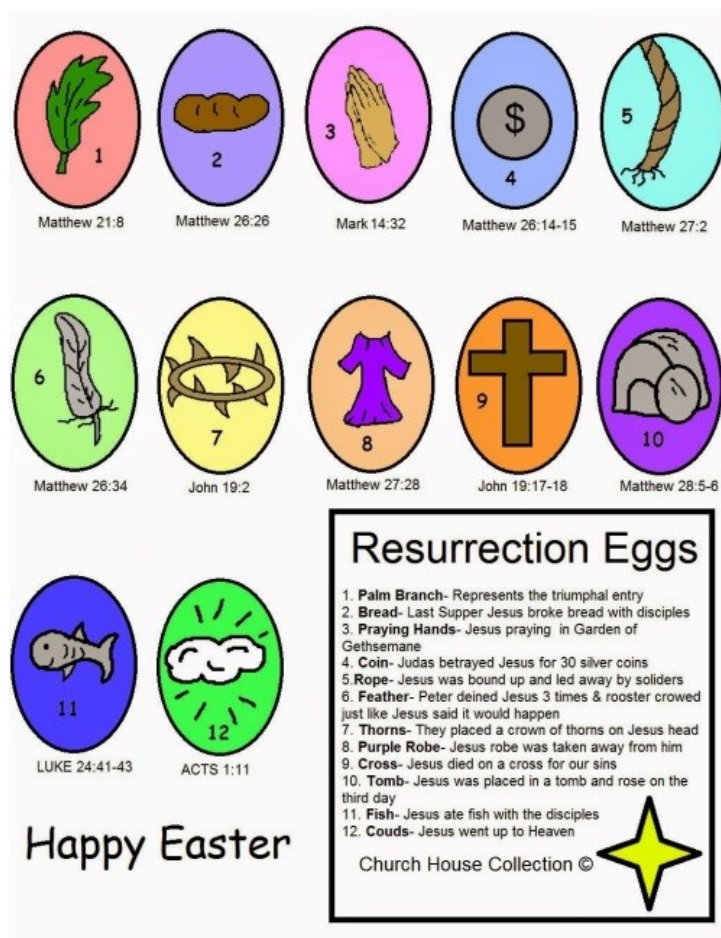
You will need:

- lots of scrap materials (these can be sourced from your local scrap store)
- large cardboard boxes
- sticky tape and PVA glue
- old sheeting or material
- paint
- other things to decorate your junk sculpture tomb



Tell the children the part of the Easter story with the tomb and say together we are going to make a giant tomb from scrap. Have a few images of tombs to help their imaginations. Then invite the children to build a giant scrap tomb. This can be used to help tell the Easter story. If it is made in the front of a church it can be used to enable the children to tell the Easter story to the adults. Please

10. Easter story treasure hunt



This can be done as suggested in the original version of the 'Resurrection Egg'

<https://www.churchhousecollection.com/resurrection-eggs.php> Or as per the updated version

<https://churchhousecollection.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/resurrection-eggs-craft.html>

Or you can try this version which has been adapted from the original

You will need: (ideally these symbols can be real items or (for ease) they can be A4 images

- 1) A Palm branch
- 2) A loaf of bread
- 3) Praying hands or a book of prayers
- 4) A packet of chocolate coins
- 5) A chain or some rope
- 6) A feather or image of a rooster
- 7) A crown of thorns made from twigs
- 8) A purple robe or coat
- 9) A cross
- 10) A large round stone or an Easter garden
- 11) A Fish (not a real one) or a children's fishing net
- 12) Clouds

Once you have collected all of these symbols, hide them around the church or school with an explanation of each of the symbols and the relevant bible reading. Then create a treasure hunt sheet that helps the children find them in the order numbered 1-12. As you find each symbol, read out the relevant explanation and bible reading (See appendix 1 for copies of this). When they have finished the Easter story treasure hunt, give each child an Easter egg (or cream egg).

Top 10 Ideas for 11-16s...

1) Read Mark for Lent

Challenge your group to join you in a reading challenge in the lead up to Easter. For those young people who enjoy reading and/or are able to read independently, it's a really good thing to read the whole story for yourself and not just the most familiar bits that often get highlighted at church or youth group. If you start reading Mark's gospel one chapter a day you will have read the whole Jesus story in 3 weeks – even if you miss a few days along the way. As you read make sure you pray and ask God to help you understand his word.

Consider buying the group a special copy of Mark's gospel each, in an easily readable translation such as the New Living Translation (NLT). Alternatively if most of the group have smart phones with Bible apps on them, they could read it that way.

2) Human donkeys

Here's a great opener for a session on Jesus's entry into Jerusalem on a donkey: Divide the group into several teams (minimum of three in a team) and hand out black sacks (cut 'head holes' in the bottom of the bag first), sticky tape and newspapers. Explain to the teams that the aim of this game is to create the best 'donkey' in five minutes. The donkey can consist of one or two team members (think pantomime horse), plus a costume made out of these simple resources. After five minutes, you'll ask your 'donkeys' to walk from one end of your venue to the other. The designs should be judged both on artistic merit and ability to hold together. Award a prize to the team with the best donkey.

(Adapted from a resource by Martin Saunders in Youthwork magazine, April 2014. Lots of free resources available if you sign up at www.youthandchildrens.work)

3) Egg Saver

The object of this challenge is for teams of young people to design a container to carry an egg, so that it does not break when dropped from a height. It could lead into a discussion about Jesus – whose name means 'God saves' – and the events of the Easter story that have changed history.

Give each team an egg (hard boiled if you prefer) and a range of materials that they can use to create the container for their egg (e.g. newspapers, bits of egg box and other packaging, sticky tape, scissors). Each team then has five minutes to get creating. When the time is up, put the egg carriers to the test by taking it in turns to drop them from a height with the egg inside. You could do this indoors using a step ladder, or perhaps from a balcony or window if it is safe to do so. Make sure you build up the suspense before the egg drops. The winner is, of course, the team with the egg that remains intact or least damaged. Award cream or mini eggs as prizes.

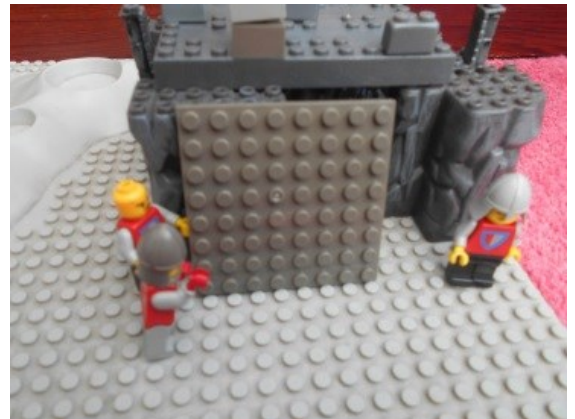




4) Easter in Lego - building the events of the story brick by brick

Lego continues to be hugely popular amongst children of all ages and this activity can work well with 11-16s as well as with under-10s and family groups.

The group will need plenty of Lego (or similar bricks & figures) and an understanding of the main events of the Easter story. Start by handing out Bibles and reading together one of the Gospel accounts or at least the key passages covering the main events of the story.



Decide as a group or in smaller teams which parts of the story you want to re-create in Lego. You might want to give each team a scene to create or do the whole thing together. Once you have created the scenes give the builders the opportunity to explain what's going on in each one. To finish take some photos that you could share on social media, turn into a slideshow or print out for others to see. If you don't have access to Lego that you can use as a group, an alternative could be to set any 'master-builders' in the group the challenge of creating the Easter story at home!

The scenes pictured were created by two 12 year old lads who photographed them and shared them with their leaders. They were then used to illustrate the story being told at one of the Easter services!



5) Egg relays

If your group needs to run off a bit of energy and test their concentration at the same time, how about playing these egg relay games? All you need is a dozen hard boiled eggs, a couple of tablespoons for each team and some willing volunteers.

Round 1: Egg & spoon

Divide the group into teams and give the first person a spoon and an egg. Each player takes it in turn to race to the end of the room and back (insert obstacles for an extra challenge if you wish), passing it to the next person without dropping it. No holding the egg with your thumb!

Round 2: Egg under chin

For round two, take away the spoons and ask the first player in each team to hold their egg under their chin. Each player then takes it in turns to race down the course and back without dropping the egg (no hands!), passing it to the next person as quickly as they can.

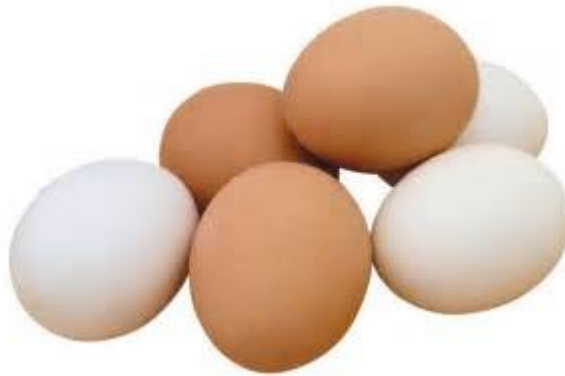
Round 3: Egg between the knees

At this point you may need to replace some of the eggs with new ones. Each player has to hold the egg between their knees this time and negotiate the course without dropping the egg, passing it to the next player for them to go.

Round 4: Egg nose roll

If they're up for one final relay race, this time the players have to get down on their knees and attempt to roll the egg with their nose down the course and back to the next player. No cheating!

Award mini or cream egg prizes to the winning team.



6) (Mini) Egg on your face!

You may have played the 'after-eight challenge' perhaps at a Christmas party, but here's an even trickier and stickier Easter version. Ask for several volunteers and give each one a small chocolate egg (the mini versions of cream eggs work well) and ask them to place one on their forehead, whilst tilting their head back. The aim of the game is to get the chocolate egg into their mouth by carefully allowing it to roll down their face. The results are usually hilarious!

7) Empty tomb rolls

A fun baking activity that will work with various age groups: In preparation make up some bread dough, enough for an average sized bread roll for each member of the group. Give each young person a piece of the dough and let them wrap a marshmallow (normal size, not the mini ones) inside of it. Ensure the marshmallow is completely wrapped in the dough or it will leak when you cook it later. Bake the dough in the oven as you would for a normal bread roll.

When cooked, remove from the oven and allow to cool, then break open the rolls. What you should find is a hollow roll - as the marshmallow has dissolved during cooking.

Cooking tip: don't make the rolls too big or the marshmallow won't completely dissolve when cooking. To check if it has worked turn cooked roll upside-down and tap the bottom to see if it sounds hollow!

(Adapted from a Messy Church Easter resource, BRF 2013)



8) How well do you know the story? (Put-it-in-the-right-order Challenge!)

A simple group activity for an Easter session that puts the young people's knowledge of the main events of the Easter story to the test. Divide your group into pairs or threes and give each team a set of Easter story events (see appendix 2) shuffled into no particular order. Ask them to see if they can put them in the right order as recorded in the New Testament, laying them out on the floor or table.

If you have a group that will know the order of events fairly well then you could make it a competition and see which team can be first to finish. The winning team could recap the events in the correct order, telling the basic story to the rest of the group.

If you have a group you think may be unsure of the Easter story then you could give them a time limit (say 4-5 minutes) to arrange them and at the end of the time you could compare lists and then discuss which is in the correct order, explaining some of the events as you go along.

9) Read the story together

The Easter story recorded in the four gospels is an amazing one; full of drama and of course an essential part of our faith and relationship with God. In your session leading up to Easter, why not take some time to read the whole story together?

Here are a few ways you might want to do that...

Choose one of the gospels accounts in a suitable translation, beginning at Jesus's entry into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12) reading through to the resurrection of Jesus.

Take time to read it yourself beforehand and decide if you think reading it all in your group setting will be too much. Note down which passages you want to use so that the main events of the story are included. You could just read the key events that we remember/celebrate as Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, or perhaps divide the story up over several sessions.

If you have some confident readers in the group divide the story into chunks and take it in turns to read, perhaps pausing to reflect or leaving space for immediate thoughts and questions between readers.

You could also allocate readers for the different characters who speak in the story (again this will need some forward planning) giving the part of the narrator to someone who will be confident to read everything else.

It could be helpful to get hold of some symbols such as a large wooden cross and some nails, a crown of thorns, bread and wine (or juice) and some images of Jesus to help bring to life the events of the story.

Above all make space and time to enter into and explore the story with your young people.

10) Useful music and video ideas

There are some really good music videos/songs that could work well with Easter sessions including:

- **Rescuer** (Good News) and **You Bled** by Rend Collective
- **Nothing but the blood** by Guvna B
- **The cross stands above it all** by Worship Central
- **What a beautiful name** by Hillsong Worship

These are available to view and stream from YouTube if you have a digital projector. If you don't have the facility to stream the videos from the Internet you may need to purchase the original audio versions as a download or on CD.

Appendix 1

1) Palm branch: This is for the triumphal entry. The palm leaves were thrown down when they saw Jesus coming. Reading: Matthew 21:8: **A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.**

2) Loaf of bread: This is for the last supper when Jesus broke bread with the disciples. Reading: Matthew 26:26: **While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. “Take and eat it,” he said; “this is my body.”**

3) Praying hands or prayer book: This is for Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Reading: Mark 14:32: **They came to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”**

4) Chocolate coins: This is for Judas betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Reading: Matthew 26:14-15: **Then one of the twelve disciples—the one named Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What will you give me if I betray Jesus to you?” They counted out thirty silver coins and gave them to him.**

5) Chain or rope: This is for the rope that Jesus was bound with by soldiers. Reading: Matthew 27:2: **They put him in chains, led him off, and handed him over to Pilate, the Roman governor.**

6) Feather or image of rooster: This is for Peter denying Jesus three times and the rooster crowed like Jesus said it would. Reading: Matthew 26:34: **Jesus said to Peter, “I tell you that before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you do not know me.”**

7) Crown of thorns: This is for the crown of thorns that was placed on Jesus head. Reading: John 19:2: **The soldiers made a crown out of thorny branches and put it on his head.**

8) Purple Robe or coat: This is for Jesus robe that was taken away. Reading: Matthew 27:28: **They stripped off his clothes and put a purple robe on him.**

9) Cross: This is for the cross that Jesus died on for our sins. Reading: John 19:17-18: **He went out, carrying his cross, and came to “The Place of the Skull,” as it is called. There they crucified him; and they also crucified two other men, one on each side, with Jesus between them.**

10) Large round stone or Easter garden: Tomb: This is for Jesus being placed in a tomb and rose on the third day. Reading: Matthew 28:5-6: **The angel spoke to the women. “You must not be afraid,” he said. “I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying”.**

11) Fish or fishing net: This is for Jesus eating fish with the disciples. Reading: Luke 24:41-43: **They still could not believe, they were so full of joy and wonder; so he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of cooked fish, which he took and ate in their presence.**

12) Clouds: This is for Jesus going up to Heaven. Reading: Act 1:10-11: **They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, “Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven.”**

Appendix 2

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey with crowds cheering.

Jesus and his followers eat the Passover meal together.

Jesus goes to Gethsemane to pray and is arrested.

**The Religious Leaders accuse
Jesus of blasphemy and hand
him over to the Romans.**

**Pilate has Jesus whipped and
beaten and sentences him to
death.**

Jesus is crucified – nailed to a wooden cross, where he dies.

Jesus' body is placed in a tomb and guarded.

On the third day the tomb is empty!

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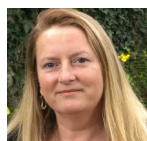
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